

### AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a studless tire having a tread comprising a rubber sheet having a thickness of at most 20 mm, which comprises:

extruding a rubber composition containing 2 to 50 parts by weight of ~~plate material or short fiber or plate-like material~~ having a Moh's hardness of 3-7 ~~having an average fiber diameter of 1 to 100  $\mu$ m and an average length of 0.1 to 5 mm based on~~ 100 parts by weight of diene rubber in a tube shape, thereby orienting said short fiber or plate-like material in the circumferential direction of said tube shaped rubber composition;

cutting said tube shaped rubber composition at one point in a sidewall thereof in the extrusion direction to obtain a rubber sheet having a complex elastic modulus  $E_a$  in the extrusion direction and complex elastic modulus  $E_b$  in the 90° direction from the extrusion direction measured at 25°C which fulfill the following equation:

$$1.1 \leq E_b/E_a;$$

cutting said rubber sheet parallel to the extrusion direction to obtain pieces; ~~and~~

rotating each piece 90° and laminating the rotated pieces together to form a tread having a thickness of at most 20 mm; and

forming a studless tire having said tread.

2-9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) The ~~studless tire of Claim 9~~ process of claim 1, wherein said short fiber or ~~plate~~ plate-like material is short fiber having an average fiber diameter of 1 to 100  $\mu\text{m}$  and average length of 0.1 to 5 mm or ~~plate~~ plate-like material having an average thickness of 1 to 90  $\mu\text{m}$  and average length of 0.1 to 5 mm.